

DR M WANTS PM TO RETRACT STATEMENT

Written apology, special press conference listed out in letter of demand served on Anwar on Monday

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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad has given Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim seven days to retract his statement, which accused the former of exploiting his position to benefit himself and his family during his tenure as prime minister.

In a letter of demand served to Anwar on Monday, Dr Mahathir also demanded the Pakatan Harapan (PH) chairman and PKR president to issue a written apology and hold a special press conference to apologise for making the statement.

Dr Mahathir — the country's longest-serving prime minister

— described the statement made by Anwar during the PKR special congress last weekend as defamatory.

"Although Anwar did not mention my name, news reports published a day after he made the remarks suggested the public understood that his allegations were in reference to me.

"The remarks suggested that I have billions of ringgit, which I distributed among myself and my family members. He also called me a scoundrel.

"These remarks paint a bad image of me. They are defamatory unless he can provide proof to support his accusation that I have amassed billions of ringgit and committed tax evasion," he said here, yesterday.

During the PKR Congress, Anwar had made a reference to someone "who in the past had been in power for 22 years and an additional 22 months" taking advantage of his position to make his family and himself wealthier.

Anwar did not mention names, but also said that the person only just realised and complained about the Malays losing everything after he was no longer in power.

"Who else had led the country for 22 years and another 22 months as the country's prime minister?" said Dr Mahathir.

In the event Anwar responded to the letter of demand, Dr Mahathir said he would not hesitate to take the necessary action against the Tambun member of parliament.

When asked if he plans to take action against others reproducing Anwar's statement, Dr Mahathir responded in the negative.

"In the case of Anwar, he is the prime minister. So, he is more credible. Other people may say a lot of things, but they are not taken seriously.

"However, Anwar said this in a meeting (PKR special congress to his members).

"He had accused me of running away with money, not paying my income taxes and all that.

"That is very serious coming from the prime minister. And that is why we are taking action," said Dr Mahathir.

On Monday, Dr Mahathir, in a posting on his blog, demanded that Anwar prove his claims that he had exploited his previous position as prime minister to benefit his family and himself.